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THE PREVENTION OF

CANCER OF THE BREAST



Issued by the
Central Council
for Health
Education

A booklet of information for women
including description of a method of
Self-examination of the Breasts

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Some facts

about

Cancer

of the

Breast

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Cancer of the breast is the most common form of cancer affecting women. It is responsible for nearly one quarter of all cases of cancer in women.

Cancer of the breast is not contagious or infectious. It is probable that a cancer of the breast discovered in the first few months of its growth will be completely cured by prompt and adequate treatment.

The first evidence of breast cancer is generally the presence of a *lump in the breast*. It is important to know that the lump is usually painless. Positive action can be taken to reduce the risk of falling a victim to breast cancer. You should study the facts and follow the advice given.

Remember—you yourself are in the best position to discover any condition which might be a cancer of your breast. Nine out of ten breast cancers are first discovered by the patient herself.

BREAST CANCER CAN BE CURED

Cancer of the Breast

These are the Danger Signals you should watch for:

1. Any lump in the breast.
2. Any deformity or alteration in the usual shape of the breast.
3. Any retraction or distortion of the nipple.
4. Any blood-stained discharge from the nipple.

The presence of one or more of these signs does not necessarily mean that you have a cancer, but it does mean that you should consult your doctor at once to find out the cause.

The most common and sometimes the only sign that can be detected is the presence of a lump or swelling, generally painless. Many lumps in the breast are *not* cancers, so you should not worry unduly if you discover such a lump. However, you should have your doctor examine it without delay.

LEARN THE DANGER SIGNALS

**A wise
precaution
for every
woman**

Every woman should ask her doctor to teach her how to examine her own breasts. An easy method is described on pages 6 and 7.

You should examine your breasts regularly once a month, but not more often. The best time is at the end of each menstrual period, and the monthly examination should be continued after the “change of life”.

Do not be alarmed if, during self-examination, you find something that *you* think is not normal. It may be harmless, but you should get an early opinion from your doctor.

Prompt action is important for diagnosis and treatment.

Save yourself unnecessary worry. Replace *ignorance* and *fear* with *knowledge* and *optimism*.

DELAY IS DANGEROUS

*No, it
ISN'T
Cancer!*



A LUMP IN THE BREAST IS NOT ALWAYS CANCER

Self- examination of the Breast

The method of self-examination of the breasts comprises two stages; firstly, *inspection* of the breasts before a mirror; secondly, *palpation* or examination of the breasts with the flat middle-portions of the fingers.



STAGE I—LOOKING

Stand straight before a mirror, with arms relaxed at the sides, and study the contour of the breasts. It is important to look for any change since the last examination. Raise the arms above the head and observe whether there is any alteration from normal, in the size or shape of your breasts, or abnormal puckering or dimpling of the skin.

STAGE 2—FEELING

Lie on your back with a pillow under the shoulders as illustrated and proceed to examine your left breast using the right hand. With the flat of the fingers of the right hand, feel gently down the inner half of your left breast.



If you have any difficulty in understanding this technique, ask your doctor if he will instruct you.

Then proceed down the outer half of your left breast and finally complete the examination by running your fingers along the upper outer portion of the breast that runs up into the armpit. Move your hand gently from place to place until the whole of the left-breast has been covered.

Next proceed to examine the right breast in the same way using your left hand.

The reason for using the flat of the fingers is that thickenings in the breast — especially in the lower half — can often be felt when using the tips of the fingers. These thickenings are not of any importance. However, if you feel a definite lump or notice any of the other signs, see your doctor as soon as possible.

Self-examination of the breast is not advised for girls or young women.

Other forms of Cancer



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Any tissue or organ of the body may be affected by cancer. Many of these forms of cancer can be cured if they are detected early and treated promptly. Watch for the common Warning Signs of Cancer —

1. A sore which refuses to heal.
2. A lump or thickening in the breast or elsewhere.
3. Any unusual bleeding or discharge.
4. Any change in a mole or wart.
5. Persistent indigestion or difficulty in swallowing.
6. Persistent hoarseness or cough.
7. Any change in normal bowel habits.

These are not necessarily symptoms of cancer, but any one may mean cancer. If one appears, consult your doctor without delay. Remember, early diagnosis and early treatment are most important if treatment is to be effective.

*This booklet is based on a booklet prepared by the Public
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COUNCIL OF VICTORIA.*